



NEWS RELEASE

December 3, 2002

Santa Teresa Agents seize nearly one ton of marijuana

Suspect rams, disables Border Patrol vehicle West of Santa Teresa POE

EL PASO, Texas – Agents from Santa Teresa, New Mexico, seized nearly a ton of marijuana Monday, Dec. 2, 2002, but not before the suspected smuggler rammed a Border Patrol vehicle during an attempt to return south to Mexico in a stolen vehicle.

The incident began when the suspect, identified as 20-year-old Mexican National, was seen crossing the international boundary approximately two miles west of the Santa Teresa Port of Entry (POE) in a 1997 Ford Expedition.

Agents attempted to stop the vehicle, which returned south toward the U.S./Mexico border on International Highway. While failing to yield, the driver rammed a Border Patrol vehicle that was parked along the shoulder of the highway rendering it inoperable. The agent in the service vehicle was not injured in the crash.

A tire deflation device was set up and successfully deflated the suspect's right front tire. Agents followed the vehicle from a safe distance as it left the roadway, drove through the desert and struck a storage container one-half mile north of the Santa Teresa POE. The subject then attempted to flee on foot to Mexico, but was apprehended.

Agents discovered 256 individually wrapped bundles containing a total of 1,865 pounds of marijuana, a cellular phone, and a two-way radio. A record check revealed the Ford Expedition used in the smuggling attempt had been stolen. The value of the marijuana is estimated at \$1.5 million. The marijuana, vehicle and subject were turned over to the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) in Las Cruces for disposition.

Agents at the Santa Teresa Station have made a total of 10 drug seizures since Oct. 1, 2002, the start of the new fiscal year. The value of the seizures is estimated at \$1.6 million.

~ USBP ~